

NCA
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WILLIAM/VANCOUVER

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HABITAT/ENERGY

ANNCR:

AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF DEBATE AT THE U.N. CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENT IN VANCOUVER, CANADA, CERTAIN ITEMS ARE BEGINNING TO CRYSTALIZE AS PRIME ISSUES AT THE MEETING. ONE OF THESE IS ENERGY. V-O-A CORRESPONDENT DAVID WILLIAMS REPORTS FROM VANCOUVER.

VOICE:

HOW WILL MANKIND FACE THE ENERGY CRISIS OF THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS? THAT IS ONE OF THE MAJOR QUESTIONS BEFORE THE U.N. HABITAT CONFERENCE. MOST EXPERTS, AT BOTH THE GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS, SEEM TO AGREE ON ONE THING AT LEAST -- AND THAT IS, THE WORLD'S SUPPLY OF GAS AND OIL WILL PROBABLY REACH ITS PEAK BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, DECLINING AFTER THAT. THE DEBATE BEING RAISED IN VANCOUVER IS ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVES.

MOST ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON TWO MAJOR ENERGY RESOURCES: NUCLEAR AND SOLAR ENERGY, AND LOOKING AT WHO SUPPORTS WHICH FOR WHAT REASONS CAN BE RATHER SURPRISING. CANADA'S MAURICE STRONG, THE FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE U.N. ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM, STRONGLY OPPOSES THE USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. HE WARNED THAT MAN FACES UNKNOWN RISKS BEYOND ANYTHING HE UNDERSTANDS, IF THE MOVE TOWARD NUCLEAR ENERGY CONTINUES.

IN THIS REGARD, MISTER STRONG, NOW AN OFFICIAL OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT, HAS TAKEN A VIEW DIRECTLY OPPOSIT TO CANADIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY. PRIME MINISTER PIERRE TRUDEAU TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE EARLIER IN THE WEEK THAT WHILE NUCLEAR ENERGY MAY HAVE CERTAIN RISKS, THE WORLD IS ENERGY STARVED, AND MOST

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES -- FACED WITH INCREASING OIL PRICES -- WANT NUCLEAR ENERGY. MISTER STRONG, ON THE OTHER HAND, ADVOCATES MOBILIZATION OF FULL RESOURCES INTO THE EXPLORATION OF SOLAR ENERGY.

ANOTHER PROPONENT OF SOLAR ENERGY IS THE BRITISH ECONOMIST, BARBARA WARD. MISS WARD, WHO IS PROBABLY THE DOMINANT FORCE AND MOST SOUGHT-AFTER PERSONALITY IN VANCOUVER THESE DAYS, HAS WARNED THE WORLD'S NATIONS NOT TO GET PUSHED INTO THE NUCLEAR ALTERNATIVE. SHE SCOFFS AT REPORTS THAT THE WORLD WILL RUN OUT OF CURRENT SUPPLIES OF GAS AND OIL BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY AND SHE ADVOCATES A MAJOR CAMPAIGN AGAINST WASTE. IT IS REPORTED THAT GERMANY AND SWEDEN, WITH STANDARDS OF LIVING TO SIMILAR TO THAT IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES, USE FIFTY PERCENT LESS ENERGY PER PERSON.

ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION, ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL CHAIRMAN, RUSSELL PETERSON, AGREES THAT CONSERVATION SHOULD BE THE FIRST PRIORITY WITH A FULL-SPEED-AHEAD PROGRAM INTO SOLAR ENERGY RESEARCH. BUT MISTER PETERSON ARGUED THAT NUCLEAR ENERGY MUST BE EXPLORED AND UTILIZED ON AN INTERIM BASIS, UNTIL SOLAR ENERGY BECOMES AN ACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTE. THE PROBLEM, SAYS MISTER PETERSON, IS THAT THE WORLD'S POPULATION IS EXPECTED TO DOUBLE WITHIN THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS, AND MAN WILL NEED ENERGY TO SURVIVE.

SO FAR, IN VANCOUVER, THE LINE-UP APPEARS TO HAVE MOST GOVERNMENTS BACKING AT LEAST AN INTERIM USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY, WHILE THE ENVIRONMENTALISTS OPPOSE IT.

GH/RCS